VISIT…

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As the world turns...

Arguments flare over whose local scene is best. Beefs erupt between writers and crews over who kinged the line last Summer. Bored youngsters with computers push their rhetorical skills as far as they can while trying to knock entire continents worth of style as unoriginal. Somewhere along the line someone gets bitchslapped for biting this month's trendy fill technique. Years worth of pieces get destroyed over silly miscommunications. We might as well all be quarreling over women in barrooms.

Once in a while, however, people emerge who completely reenergize the scene by looking past all of that garbage. They look to themselves for inspiration and in turn make a tremendous contribution to the culture both in their artwork and in their personal conduct. The twin brothers Os Gemeos of Sao Paulo, Brazil, are such people. It is for this reason that we feature them in this issue.

Worldwide Graffiti Scholarship, inc.

THE TWOISVE OUSE POVETS

Photo Contributions by:

Alien, Baser, Bask, Bugone, Ceaze, Celo, Cyne, Dask, Dekay, Deed, Duro 3/Third Degree, Edec, Emit, Ease 13, Eser, Jigs, Kemo, Kems, King 157, Kwaze/Volume 1, Nesm, News, Oils, Patrick Swayze, Pove, Rage 3, Reso, Revs, Seak, Shepard the Giant, Smash, Soz, Sub, Wow 123, Zeckis...

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Despite our good intentions, Twelve Ounce Prophet Magazine has never been published four times annually. We will continue to strive towards that goal, but for now, quit your damn bitching. Regardless, a four issue subscription can still be bought within the United States by sending $18 to our address. If you live outside the United States, and for whatever reason you still want copies of our shitty magazine, you can save yourself a trip out here by sending a check or money order in the amount of $26 to our address (US Dollars drawn from an American bank). For those of you that missed the boat, select back issues can still be bought within the United States for $5 ($7 everywhere else in the world). All that corporate shit we mentioned in the last issue never worked out, so once again, we're accepting government food stamps. As always, we're also still accepting nudy flix. All submissions become the sole property of Twelve Ounce Prophet Magazine and cannot be returned. However, if we print your submission, we will hook you up with free copies of the issue that they appear in (extra bounty to those of you that really hook us up lovely). Once again (not that any of you ever listen), to insure proper photo credits and to get your free copies, clearly print your name, address, and photo information on the back of each flick. Fuck Larry Flynt and us selling out. We're starting to get used to this no sleeping, no chicks, always broke shit. Besides, why have loot when instead we can remain the sole owner to the copyrights of such a prestigious publication? Any reproduction in whole or in part without our express written permission is strictly prohibited unless in the context of review. World rights reserved. ©1998

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The transformation begins
with an inspired effort.
Years later,
through all the sleepless nights,
physical poundings,
and brushes with the law,
it is still inspiration
and effort that continue
the transformation.
Your props, beefs,
and street fame all testify
to this inspiration and effort,
yet our only surface reminders of
a transformation have been
designed, built, and executed
by you and you alone.

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Tilt - T.S. (NY Clean Train)

Alu - K.D. (

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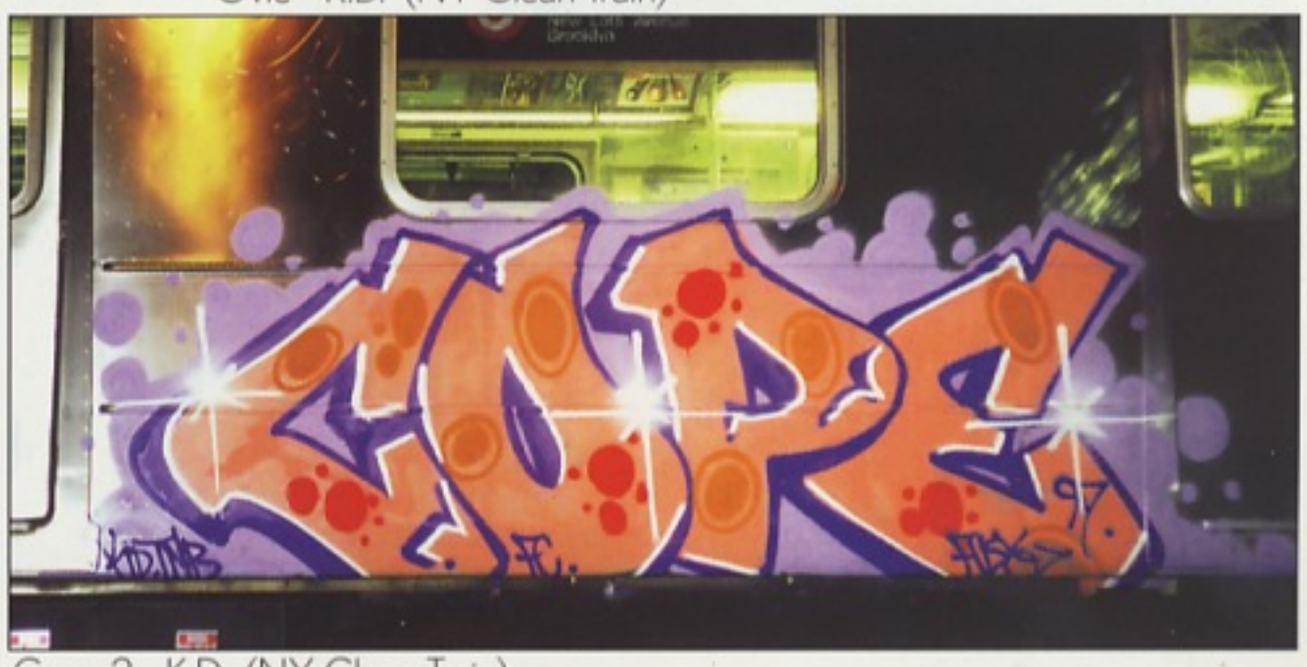

Cope 2 - K.D. (NY Clean Train)

Was - Fly ID (NY Clean Train)

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"MSG" by Beno - M.S.G. (Atlanta, GA) - Rest In Peace...

Cope 2 - K.D., Flite - T.D.S., Ivory - T.M.7., Part - T.D.S. (Bronx, NY)

Crome - M.S.G., Hest, Daim - T.C.D., Kane 7, Loomit - F.X., Tasek (Miami, FL)

Baez (Philadelphia, PA)

Emit - D.F. (Boulder, CO)

Celo - D.H.L., Rage 3 - D.H.L. (Danbury, CT)

Tich - T.M.7. (Louisville, K

Nace - D.F., Bust, Acura (Philadelphia, PA)

Jive - D.F. (New Haven, CT)

Logek - G.E.D., Eser (Miami, FL)

Dato - S.U.K. (Unknown)

Bles - A.W.R., Nyce - A.W.R. (San Diego, CA)

Jonski - D.C.5. (Chicago, IL)

"Sao Paulo, Brazil, is where we live. It is so crazy and so huge, anything that you would ever want to see can be seen in the streets. We don't know if Sao Paulo is the only city like this, there must be other hidden cities like this. In Sao Paulo, if you wish to see someone starving, walk around the block. If you wish to see a millionaire, walk around the same block again. You will see men dragging carts around filled with cardboard, writing small poems on the boxes in which they live, the reality of the streets is not something that can be escaped. The people who have the means to end it do not do anything about it because they are more concerned with their own situation. People here are too concerned here with day-to-day survival to think about other things. People aren't concerned with the future because they must survive today. Because of this, everything falls to shit. Sao Paulo is a place where it is very difficult to notice the good things in the street, we only notice the bad things because there are so many of them. Everywhere you look you see kids huffing glue, people begging, people who are deformed. We can stand there painting a wall and a man will come up to us out of the garbage and start explaining his life story to us. Everywhere you look are the homeless, little kids and babies living on the street. The things that we paint are often a result of seeing that type of thing in the street. We often paint simply for the people in the streets and if it makes their life a little easier knowing that we paint just for them, and bring a little color to the streets just for them, it is a means of escaping the reality of the harsh world. These people are able to see these big murals and know that they are not excluded from the rest of the world. We want them to know that they are thought about. Explaining to people outside of Sao Paulo what goes on there is very difficult because the people who live there don't know themselves what's going on. We suspect that a lot of major cities are like that, that people's main concern is for money and survival. Everything that exists must coexist, and Sao Paulo is a land of coexistence. There are police who don't get paid shit and because of that they don't care about what they're doing. Because of that everything else follows in a vicious circle. The cops get frustrated and steal from people. There are things in Brazil that are difficult to explain. There are people who are even poorer than those in shantytowns, because at least people there can scrounge food from the garbage. There are people who are so poor that they cannot even find edible garbage, so they find chunks of cardboard and tear it up and boil it, making soup from cardboard. These people are so poor they cannot even live in a shantytown, they just get soaked every time it rains. They figure that anything must be better than where they are, any city, anything. They pick up and move to shantytowns and sometimes do a great deal better. That's why there are so many shantytowns, because once there, nobody can go higher. Kids who are born into that life don't have the resources to go any higher. They live their entire lives that way. We paint because it creates a portal into another world that other people hopefully can peer into in order to see another life and world that exists."

- Os Gemeos

There were fifteen kids hanging out on a bridge. Their eyes were completely red, not bloodshot zooted on weed red, but blood red. The whites of their eyes were bleeding. One held a bag of glue in his hand. All fifteen of the kids huffed glue so that they could numb the fact that their stomachs were eating themselves out of hunger. The kid stuck the bag up to his face, took a deep huff, and passed it to the next kid. One kid lay motionless and belly up in the ditch by the road. He was covered in feces and his eyes looked like something out of another world. One kid went up to an elderly woman who was passing by. He asked for some change, politely. The woman ignored him. The kid spat on her and let fly a string of obscenities. The woman hurried off.

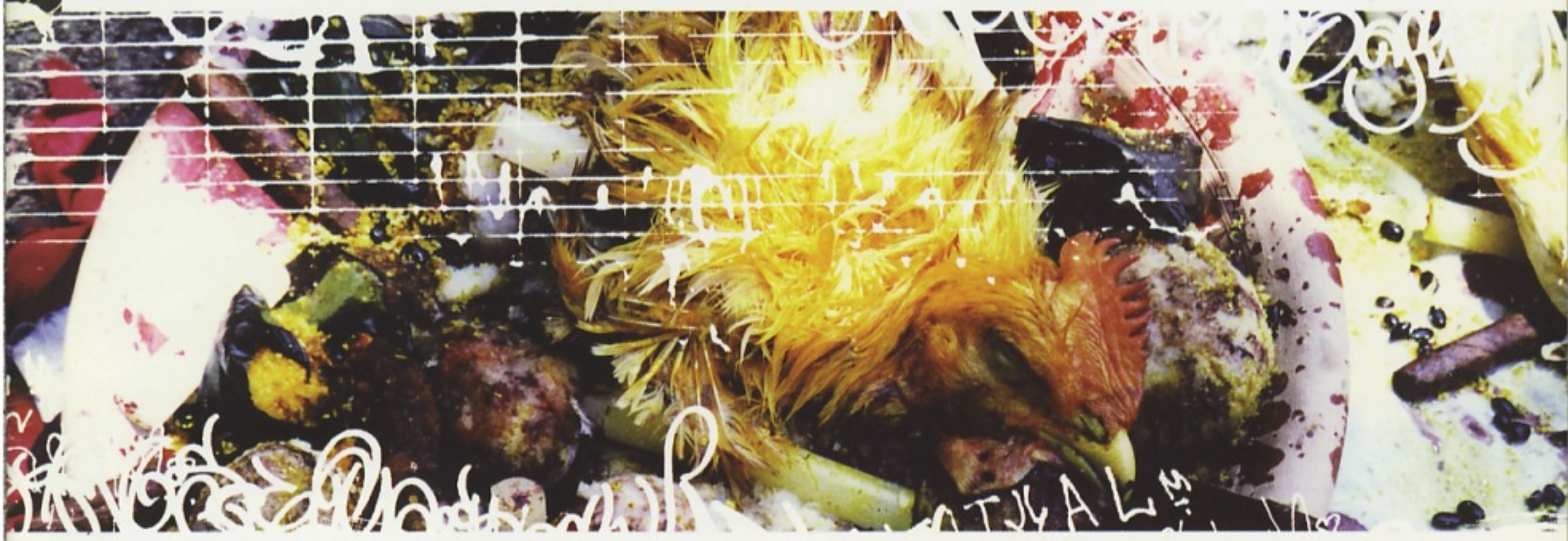
Every Tuesday, for years and years, there has been a market held on a certain street in Sao Paulo. Stepping onto the narrow street a smiling man offers us slices of mango. We take the pieces and eat them messily as the juice of the most sensuous fruit on Earth drips off our faces. Every few seconds we must come to a complete halt as one of the world's most

to ask us how we are and make friendly chat.

What drew Raven and I to Brazil was the work of Os Gemeos; two twin brothers living and painting in Sao Paulo. "Os Gemeos" means "The Twins" in Portuguese, Brazil's official language. The twins don't separate their names or styles; they both paint under the name "Os Gemeos" and do all their work together. Being twin brothers, they have a deep connection to each other which allows them to work together to create a tremendous number of seamless, beautiful paintings. Like most Americans, I knew very little about Brazil, but after seeing the work of Os Gemeos, I had to find out what it was about the combination of the two that lead to such incredible artworks. As it turned out, each one helped explain the other.

After World War I, Brazil fell under a series of semi-dictatorships that promised modernization and progress for their rural nation. The result was a mixture of utter success and utter failure. Many people were able to be at the forefront of urban modernization and got in on the

people aren't concerned with the future because they must survive today.



beautiful women strolls by looking just fine. Eventually we make it to the corner and buy a meat pastel from the man there, who takes extra time to show us how he cooks the pastel and feeds sugar cane into a grinder to make sweet juice for us. The hours pass by so nicely that we hardly even notice them for all the people stopping

ground floor of massive financial growth, leaving them fantastically rich. Far more were left behind in limbo - farmers and rural people who lost everything. Sao Paulo became the center of almost all of Brazil's industry and wealth. As a result, a massive exodus to the city occurred, which continues to this day. Its

population is now over twenty-two million people. That is not a typo. Sao Paulo is nearly three times as populous as metropolitan New York City.

Arriving at the airport in Sao Paulo was a bit worrisome. Everyone I had talked to in the States seemed to

have a horror story of Brazilian street crime. Everyone at the airport looked criminal, and neither Raven nor my Brazilian hosts were anywhere to be seen. I took a deep breath and tried to relax. Delay is a constant in Brazil. Fast-paced American expectations will make one go nuts. I rode up and down the escalators for fun, and as if

by design, as soon as I started to relax and smile to myself, Raven showed up with my hosts.

Sao Paulo is a big place and it takes a long time to get anywhere. The ride to our host's house took around two hours, and it seemed even longer due to the totally new surroundings. I had heard a tiny bit about Brazilian graffiti through interviews with San Francisco's Twist, who had spent some time there with Os Gemeos in 1995. He had said it was this raw, pure stuff done with little rollers. What he hadn't said was how prolific the indigenous graf was. From the car windows I can see it absolutely everywhere. The highway walls are slaughtered. Sao Paulo is as bombed as any city I've ever seen, New York included.

In the 1960's in Brazil, students and young people took to the streets to get political messages out using bucket paint and little paint rollers. The government media called these bits of graffiti "picheçao," pronounced "pee-chay-sow," and the people who created them, picheadores. In those early days, name-based graffiti didn't really exist in South America, it was all political. By the the end of the 1970's the political picheçao movement had mostly died out. In the mid-1980's, however, picheçao was resurrected with a new focus: the name. Most of the new picheadores were rock n' roll fans, which at the time was a cutting-edge subculture in Brazil. Much like hip-hop graffiti, the emphasis in the new picheçao is not politics but getting up and fame. In terms of style, however, hip-hop graffiti and picheçao have almost nothing in common.

Modern picheadores in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janiero are primarily the grubby, dirt poor, barefoot street kids that tourist brochures warn you about. They use a print style that has its roots, most likely, in rock n' roll album cover typefaces, with some elements of the Old English fonts the Latino gangs in Los Angeles have used since the 1930's. The rock n' roll styles draw from the cover art of bands like Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Motorhead, and so on. However, picheçao has developed and progressed to the point where these influences are really only trace elements of what is seen on the walls: picheçao is a fully developed and unique form of graffiti, and these kids are hardly a bunch of metalheads. Picheçao ideally are done from the ground up to as high as the person can reach, somewhat like the early Philadelphia wickets and tall print tags. Many picheçao tags executed on previously blank walls will stretch for a full city block. All of these various elements meet in a a cryptic and beautiful style that absolutely covers the city.

Picheadores keep their media simple. Though many will use spray paint, it doesn't work as well visually, and fat caps are not used because they are unavailable. Marker tags are unheard of. The weapon of choice is instead the two or three inch foam roller with an industrial color of bucket paint. Generally, picheçao does not get too colorful. Twist recalled a time when he met a little kid out writing his name with a three inch roller and a bucket of mud. Kids will use whatever they can find to bomb, including tar, which they steal from road crews and enjoy using because it is impossible to buff. Like in hip-hop graf, great respect is given to those who can get up in ill fame spots, or go all-city. One thing you'll see in Sao Paulo that you'd never see elsewhere are roller tags done by leaning over the edge of the tops of tall buildings. Some of the tallest buildings in Sao Paulo have insane rollover tags that loom forty or fifty stories above the ground. To get up on the rooftops, little barefoot kids will pull some human fly moves and climb up the outside. Kids die all the time from high falls, but the risk doesn't matter at all to picheadores. To the world at large, they are hated, worthless drains on society, and they themselves couldn't give less of a fuck about that.

Ask around in Sao Paulo and they'll tell you that one of the greatest picheadores was DI. There were a lot of picheadores in the city, but he was always the one who took it to the next level. His escapades are legendary in Sao Paulo, and just as kids kick around JA and Sane/Smith stories in New York, every kid in Sao Paulo seems to have a topper DI story.

the place, broke through the wall into the next apartment, and continued the procedure. As he went he would lean out off each balcony and catch a roller tag. He got to the rooftop, bombed his name bigger than ever, and got out. He then reported the incident to the police and got on televison, pretending to be a victim.

He would bomb his best spots and then set fire to the buildings so that TV crews would come broadcast his madness to the whole city. Unlike most picheadores, who often kill each other over spots, DI could walk into any neighborhood in the city and be treated like a king. One night at a bar he was shot dead, possibly by police. The kids of the city erected a monument to him, a massive concrete DI tag along the side of the road.

"The people in Brazil who do graffiti most predominantly are from shantytowns and very poor backgrounds. They might know some of what is going on in the next neighborhood or city but for them to know what's going on farther afield is impossible, it isn't in their reality. It wouldn't matter even if some of these kids tried to copy or compete with what's going on in Europe or the States because they couldn't afford the paint and don't have the technical resources that it takes. Their style is more about themselves because they have to use what they can find to catch tags and make the best of their situation. Because of this you can count on your hands the number of kids who are doing styles that are stylistically similar to what is going on in the rest of the world. Most kids here have only seen a television through a store window, and they couldn't even picture what a place like New York or California looks like. So for them to try to emulate a style of graffiti from there, it isn't just implausible, it's ridiculous."

- Os Gemeos

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DI had his eye on a particularly exclusive apartment building along the Avenida Paulista, the Fifth Avenue of Sao Paulo. Ordinary luxury buildings have security. This one had armed guards inside and out. DI timed his mission to coincide with a security change, and tossed a grappling hook up onto the first balcony. He climbed up, broke into the apartment, robbed

Picheçao took off for a simple reason: Sao Paulo is undoubtedly one of the ugliest cities in the world. Since 1970, Sao Paulo's population has increased by over fifteen million people. That alone is almost twice as many people as live in metropolitan New York. The city needed massive amounts of new housing, and the solution was to build countless huge, cheap, concrete apartment buildings. Everywhere you look in Sao Paulo, the horizon ends in ugly, bland buildings stretching on to oblivion. A large number of these buildings became abandoned for one reason or another and became huge squats for the city's estimated four or five million homeless people. With this many people taking dumps out in the open, the city has a certain lingering smell: the whole city smells like shit. It varies a bit by neighborhood, but the stench is always there. The people who control Sao Paulo's appearance couldn't care less about making it look nice. Stylish buildings cost extra, and in Sao Paulo they don't return the investment. As a result I saw only a handful of buildings in Sao Paulo that actually looked nice and were built to be beautiful. In a city with this many extreme degrees of ugly, people's attitudes towards street art are a lot more accepting.

People do not like picheçao, however. Writers in the hip-hop sense can get most of their work done during the day; but picheadores have to work at

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night. Cops generally either like or don't care about hip-hop graffiti, but they will shoot picheadores on sight and dump their bodies in a sewer. Picheçao is a vehicle for the poor youth of the city to assert their existence and self-worth, and to do it loudly. The public perceives street children as worthless. The police often will gun down street kids for lack of a better solution. These same kids laugh through the gunfire as they confront this perception with their names - huge, everywhere, and at the expense of those fortunate enough to own property. Despite the power of money and guns, the police are not winning the war. The kids have numbers and heart on their side. The streets are a wonderful state of anarchy.

In the big cities of Brazil, the kids are in control. Young crews and gangs have the streets sewn up and have given places such as Sao Paulo and Rio de Janiero an international reputation as a good place to go if you want your shit taken. People warned me left and right about Brazil's street crime. To my bemusement I soon discovered that the stick up kids are often too poor to have weapons, and thus rob tourists with their minds - and foot speed - more than anything. If you can outrun your average thirteen-year-old and have no moral problem about beating him down to get your camera back, you'll probably be fine in Brazil.

Like Sao Paulo, Rio de Janiero is also an ill place. Along the world famous beaches of Copacabaña and Ipanema are plenty of high-end tourist hotels, restaurants, clubs, and whorehouses. With all that loot around, the stick-up kids are loving it. Many belong to gangs of kids whose passion is surfing the Rio elevated and street-level subways. The best spots for a ride are the roof and doors. As these trains are electric and powered by high-voltage overhead wires which hang close to the train's roof, surfers need to be very careful to constantly dodge them. Veteran train riders often are missing an arm or some fingers, burned off in an instant by an overhead wire. Train surfing crews have rivals, and surf particular lines which they alone control. Crews have membership cards and hand signals. If you decide to surf a line without permission, you will find yourself very dead. If rival crews see each other surfing, they often will exchange gunfire from the moving train's rooftops. Crazy things like this are always happening in Brazil.

Os Gemeos showed me a wall to do a quick piece. The only spot without other graff on it was near a sleeping homeless man. The twins told me to paint quietly. I tried to be quiet but woke the guy up anyway. He started up with his fists raised and ready to defend himself. He was a small guy and looked like he had been beaten up to hell and back more than a few times in his life. I am not such a small guy. If I had hit him he would have been out cold. Still, the man had his fists raised and ready to represent for his own pride and dignity. He looked very scared, in a way that said "oh no, not again!" as he obviously figured he was going to get another beating. One of the twins rushed over and calmed the man down, telling him all I was doing was painting the wall. The man limped away and I did my painting in the same "what in the hell am I doing here?" haze I felt many other times that week.

The first night I was there, Raven and I went for a walk with Os Gemeos late at night. At a turn in the road we came across a ceramic dish with a candle in it, lying by the curb in a small nook in the concrete. It was an example of Voodoo, or Macumba, as it is called in Brazil. A moment later, an old woman crossed our path singing in a screeching tone, "They have taken everything from me, I'm never gonna give anything to anybody anymore, The police took everything, My man took everything, I'm never gonna give anything to anybody anymore, I'm never gonna give anything to anybody anymore." It was yet another bugout in a series of many.

Brazil is a land where many cultures have collided. Before the time of Columbus and the genocide he helped spark, the land mass that came to be known as Brazil had many well-developed indigenous cultures. It also had the deepest jungles, so that when the Europeans arrived along the coast, the indigineous people fled for the vast interior to escape enslavement and death. Many of these tribes have been able to live in peace since then. In addition to the indigenous and European population, there is also a massive African population, brought in as slaves. Economically, the result is a land where Europeans are in a minority but still control the loot. Culturally, Brazil is a different story, an incredibly complex and even mixture of South American, European, and African indigenous cultures. With a recent influx of Asian immigrants, this mix is only going to become more flavorful and deep.

One night the twins pulled out their linoleum and set it up in the street by their house. They set up their stereo to rock a tape of old school classics, invited some friends over, and it was on. We hung out and had a good old time breaking until it got real late. In particular we had a great time uprocking, the hip-hop breaking form which is done standing and mimics a fight, trying to embarrass the opponent in mock combat.

In Brazil's deep tradition of dance there exists something similar to the uprocking of modern-day breakdancing. Beginning several hundred years ago, slaves in Brazil developed a style of dance which was also a martial art and a means of self-defense. It was called "capuera." (pronounced "ka-PUWER-ah") It arose out of the need for slaves to have some means of defending

themselves. They combined it with dance to make it seem innocuous and non-threatening to the masters. To accompany the dancing fighters, musical instruments were developed which also functioned as weapons.

In the present day in the streets of Brazil, the practitioners of capuera demonstrate their martial art dance in much the same way that breaking crews use the streets as their stage. Like breaking crews, capuera crews will rock customized uniforms. One of the freshest cultural bridges is seeing Brazil's more urban capuera dance crews freely combine hip-hop's style of breaking with their own. One minute they dance in the slow and deliberate capuera style, but to the music of the Cold Crush Brothers. The next they are rocking backspins to traditional Brazilian music. It was hip hop breakdancing and its easy realation to Brazilian culture that first inspired Os Gemeos.

"Back in the times when breakdancing first hit Sao Paulo, they had a real strong movement going on, there were a lot of people dancing. We started dancing, and since we had been drawing all our lives it was just a natural progression. In around 1984-1986 the kids always used to dance in front of our house. At the time it was really popular to have tshirts and jackets with painted designs, we used to copy the designs, and from there we started making up our own stuff."

-Os Gemeos

On Sundays in Brazil, the police have the day off. Though one can usually paint the streets in the daytime without a problem, you can go a little crazier on Sundays. Having no cops on duty makes for good street bombing, and it's when most of the work gets done.

One Sunday, Raven and I rolled around and bombed with Os Gemeos, Nina, and Oli - the twins' girlfriends, both dope painters in their own right. Being that the coppers had the day off, we all smacked throwies up and down major avenues with cars whizzing by. Raven and I were loving it and having a blast. Soon we found ourselves on a wide, bright street lined with stores and restaurants. We walked up to a big traffic junction

where a nearby highway overpass intersected. One of the twins hopped a low fence and walked down a steep clay slope, down towards the highway level. He disappeared below the overpass for a while, then called to his brother. We all made our way down the slope. Everything became quiet.

After a difficult and slippery descent down the red clay slope, we found ourselves standing in the center of a small shantytown, which was tucked away under the underpass, somewhat

hidden from the view of the highway. In just a few feet of walking we were a full world away from the vibrant and prosperous street above. The vibrant street felt so far away, yet it formed a roof over our heads. There was a large concrete wall to one side, the base of which was lined with mattresses. This wall was visible from the highway and I assumed we were here to paint it. The ground was wet clay which was so slippery that we had to watch our every step. Somehow, nobody fell on their ass. The air hung heavy with a nauseating smell, a mixture of human excrement and garbage. The air even tasted disgusting. The din of the highway kept a constant high level of noise which almost immediately gave me a headache.

We were standing in the center of what the Brazilians call a "favela." (pronounced fa-VEL-ah) "Shantytown" is the nearest English equivalent. "Ghetto" is not quite right as it implies a neighborhood. Favelas are not neighborhoods; instead they fill in the no-man's land areas in and around cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janiero. The undersides of bridges and underpasses, highway median strips, parks, vacant lots, and many of the city's other neutral real estate locales fill up with makeshift villages, often housing several entire families. Favelas are built from scrap wood and metal and are often quite permanent structures. Favela residents don't sit on the stoop and drink forties. Both stoops and forties would be considered luxuries by most favela dwellers. The poverty level in the favelas begins with what passes for dirt poor in the United States and just gets worse. It is quite possible that as many as five million of Sao Paulo's residents live in favelas, filling in the cracks between more privileged neighborhoods.

The first twin who went down under the bridge had gone to ask the favela's residents if they minded our coming down and painting there. Unlike most street painting, which is done on anonymous structures, here we were actually painting in someone's residence. The shanties down there were constructed of tarps and plywood and whatever else they could find. The residents stayed inside, only poking their heads out, if at all. My best guess is that there were about ten people living there, all men.

We got to work and soon finished our paintings, took quick photos, and hustled back up to street level. Back up on the ground the sun was bright and the grass that bordered the road was a blinding green. I immediately felt sick to my stomach, and then had an awful craving for a strong drink. Raven and I dashed madly across the avenue to a small bar and pounded a drink, breathing heavily and dazed. Once again I wondered what in the hell I was doing there.

A great part of me didn't want to paint in the favela. As we had been painting, one of the favela's residents sat outside the shanty and seemed a bit more outgoing than the rest. Oli, the only one of us not painting, talked to him as the rest of us worked. She is quite a beautiful girl, and I couldn't help but think what a dignifying thing it must have been for the man to have even a simple conversation with her. She told us later that the man said it was a community of people with AIDS, all of whom had been kicked out by their families. Having nothing but each other, they stick together in a community by the highway. In a situation of such poverty, the fact that they can stay unified seems to me the ultimate in human dignity. They have nothing but each other. The idealist in me likes to think that they have some art to go with that now. For now that's all the rationale I have for what we did.

A few days before this, the twins told Raven and I that they had secured permission for a nice wall for all of us to paint. They weren't kidding. They took us to a beauty of a white wall, about ten feet tall and long enough for six names or so. The wall was next to a highway, and belonged to a large-scale printing press. It was the usual situation for permission walls, where the owners get sick of painting over tags on their walls and are pleased as punch when a bunch of kids step to them and paint their wall. Being that Raven and I were from overseas, the printing press management took extra interest in us, touring us around and giving us free meals at their cafeteria. We made small talk about publishing and had a nice time.

This didn't cloud the diplomacy that was going on. We as tourists - and people putting together a magazine, even more so - were to see the printing press as a land of happy Brazilians, gainfully employed. They were even setting up audio equipment and festive decorations for the company Christmas party. Not missing the diplomatic chance, the owner extended party invitations to the eight of us who got down on their wall. The day of the party was Sunday, the same Sunday that brought us the painful experience of painting down in that favela. Not two hours after being down in the favela, we were handed bottles of beer, cheap company-logo baseball caps, some tasty barbecued beef, and thrust into a crowd of happy Brazilians dancing to the live band's samba version of the macarena.

Trying to put the afternoon behind me, I found the flyest girl in the place and tried to pick her up with my seven words of Brazilian Portuguese. It didn't work, so I went out to grab a beer with Raven and take another look at the wall, which by then was almost completed. Os Gemeos were plugging away at it, wrapping up the background. One kept working while the other hopped off his ladder and stopped to talk to us. He said that this printing press represented a dream to most Brazilians. Anybody who got a job here would be respected, whether they did skilled work or swept the floors. Jobs at places like the press are very scarce in Brazil. Even though they represent a dream, jobs at the press don't pay much more than a survival salary. Every year, the bosses throw a lavish Christmas party and make everybody happy. We happened to be there when the bosses threw the employees a bone.

continued on last page

The press' owner had come by to survey the wall while we were painting a day or two before. I took a break to talk with him. He spoke fluent English, the only Brazilian I met on my journey who did. He was the kind of wealthy businessman who will wear khaki pants and a flannel shirt to work so that his employees will think he's just one of the gang. After work the Rolex and the Versace come out. Amidst our small talk, he told me that he was going to the U.S. in a few weeks. I asked where. "Aspen," he said. "Oooh, you'll like that," I said. I knew some people who had been there and raved about its amazing skiing and opulent quality of life. He said " I will love it. It's my eighth time there." My jaw dropped as I considered just exactly how much more money this guy has than the average Brazilian. I got back to painting.

Over time the world of the twins began to make more and more sense to me. In a city where hell is directly on the surface of the concrete, there must be something, somewhere, that can take you away from the moment by moment assaults on your very will to live. For Os Gemeos it has been a world of fantasy, a world built from the best things in life. It is a world which emerges through the twins' art into the world of reality. Their characters and iconography all come from this fantasy world, and the more they paint, the more their world emerges to us as well.

"Every day we find out a little bit more about the fantasy world. There is a lot left to be discovered. It is like a daydream that's real, the places are a real-life fantasy, we can feel them. Everything that we like and want we collect in one place, all our favorite things, that's where the world exists. All the good things and favorite things, they are all there. Even when we show sadness and violence it does not mean that it happens in our world, and since both do exist, they are both related and there are crossovers and influences for both. The characters that we draw have always existed, but it is only through drawing them over and over again that we remember that they exist. We paint with red and yellow because they are very powerful colors, it makes the piece look as though it has been lit up from within. In our world they have always been important, one day we hit upon it and it made perfect sense. The only way to understand the fantasy world is to be capable of dreaming, and once you are capable of dreaming, be capable of believing what you're dreaming about. A lot of the time people may not even be able to understand something like our full-color paintings because their life is so miserable. We do throwups and simple characters in the streets all over so that its gets more simple, so that people can understand it. When we paint simply like that it's a totally different thing than doing big pieces because our minds are so full of images from the street and we make our characters and statements a little more loose because of that. The style we have now is a result of what we have been doing all our lives and developed between the two of us and from living in Sao Paulo in our day to day experiences. Despite that, we learned a lot from Twist, who showed us a lot of things when he came down that we hadn't been able to learn here in Sao Paulo otherwise. Everything that is possible to learn can be learned on the streets of Sao Paulo. While Twist taught us a lot of what we were lacking about graffiti, there was a great deal which we did not lack because we had seen so much on the streets of Sao Paulo. The streets were our school and our subject matter comes from the streets. Many times when we go to hit a spot we have no idea what we wish to paint, but we will paint something based on what we see while going to the wall. Being twins is great because when we paint we share the same world. We are able to both see into this world and understand it and express ourselves together through it. What we do may not be in the same context but it is always in the same world."

- Os Gemeos

Sao Paulo is a land where no one, it seems, is truly at home. Sojourners from Africa, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere in the Americas have come to Sao Paulo because it is a place where they can survive, if nothing else. Though millions have starved and died horrible deaths, they have created a city whose many cultures are all rooted in survival at all costs. Sao Paulo is a terrible beauty, the horrors of hell manifesting themselves right on the city's surface, yet more deeply within that lies a beauty that comes from so many people coexisting in one space. In situations this bad, human spirit is at once the most beautiful and the most visible thing possible, and it is there that we see the very will to survive.

F. Jason
Fleenor

1974-1997

RIP

Rest In Piece

Gregory
Barrett
Pontner

1971-1997

RIP

Loomit - F.X. (Munich, Germany)

Dee 1, Wow 123, Posydon, Rostro, Mookie, Homs (Barcelona, Spain)

Zeckis - D.V.E., B-Side - N.C.S. (Chille)

Gismo - S.A.A. (G

Sonik - M.S.B., Os Gemeos, Raven - F.A., Vitche (Sao Paulo, Brasil)

Alien - D.S.C. (Barcelona, Spain)

Hast, Swet - S.U.K. (Denmark)

Os Gemeos (Sao Paulo, Brasil)

Mode 2 (Belfast, N. Ireland) *Detail

Nina (Sao Paulo, Brasil)

Zeta, Ufone, Rostro (Spain)

Sub - D.F. (Cincinnatti, OH) *detail

Ceaze - C.T.C. (Atlanta, GA)

Shie - I.H.S., Ease - I.H.S., Stack - I.H.S., DK - F.A. (Atlanta, GA)

Dask - M.S.G., Kemo - M.S.G. (Ft. Lauderdale, FL)

Crome - M.S.G. (Miami, FL)

"Dets" by Rear - F.A., Rage - I.H.S., Jine - R.B. (Miami, FL)

Per - F.X., Ces - F.X., Snow - F.X., Big - F.X., Pose 2 - F.X. (Bronx, NY)

How - R.A.L., Cope 2 - K.D., Nosm - R.A.L. (Bronx, NY)

King 157 - R.T.M. (San Jose, CA)

Ewok - A.W.R. (St. Louis, MO)

Emit - D.F., Sub - D.F. (Unknown)

How - R.A.L., Nosm - R.A.L., Med - K.D., Seen - U.A., Cope 2 - K.D. (Bronx,

Yes 2 - F.X., Ces - F.X. (Cincinnatti, OH)

Jher - N.P., Emit - D.F., Chase (Denver, CO)

Duels - T.S.T., "Seemso" by Kane 7, Loomit - F.X., Tasek, Can 2 - S.U.K., Daim - T.C.D. (Miami, FL)

Virus - A.A., Hews - D.V.S., Sonic - B.A.D., Ink 76 - B.A.D. (Brooklyn, NY)

Mode 2 (Unknown)

It was cold and snowy that night. Part of me wanted to stay home and sleep. The other part of me wanted to Bomb the line. I called AIRBORN to see what was up. He then called TACK, and just like that, it was on. We knew it wasn't the best night to paint but we wanted to rock badly! We knew it would be a mission from the moment we got outside. The wind was gusting up as soon as I got out. I remember thinking "maybe this isn't such a good idea", then saying, "fuck it". I hooked up with the fellas and we took off to 145th. St., 137st lay-ups. When we got there we looked around and didn't see anything funny, so we snuck in and walked towards the back of the station. As we're walking back, out of nowhere two 5-0 stepped out from behind the beams. Imagine them seeing three kids with shopping bags full of spraypaint. They had struck gold. They made us throw our paint in the tracks and get outta there, saying they'd arrest us and fuck our shit up if we came back. We were all shocked they didn't bust us, or didn't get stupid. Allot of 5-0 are suckers and wanna try anybody. This time we got lucky.

SPADE 127 FBA FC TC5
ROCKERS REVENGE 98TH!!

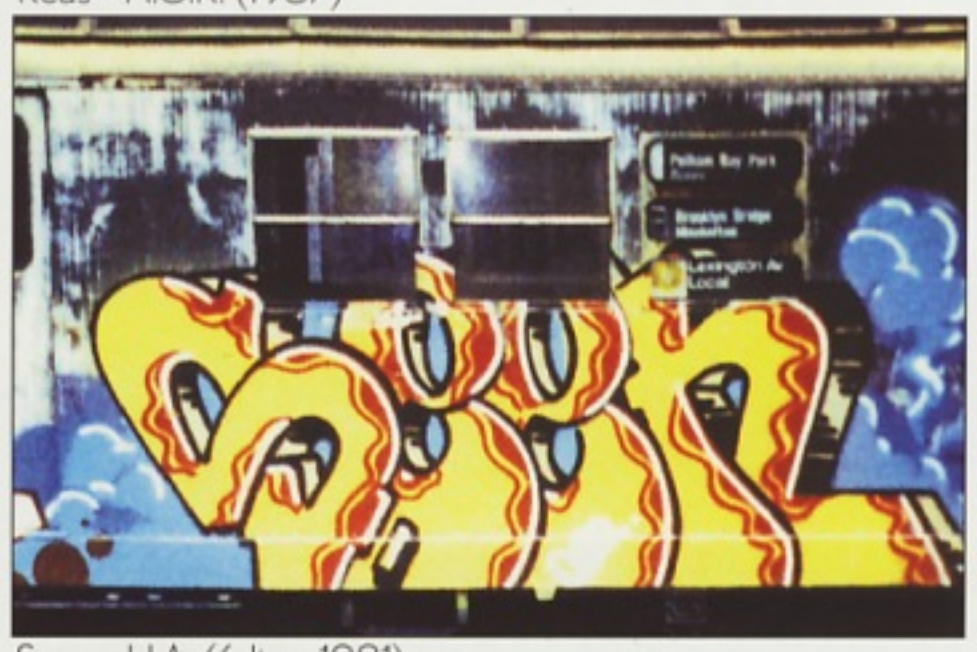
Still we didn't wanna give up, all our paint was still on the tracks and we didn't want anybody getting they're hands on it. More than anything we wanted to burn, and we definitely weren't gonna go out like that. So we scoped the 5-0 for a while as they harassed some other writers, and then eventually they all left. We then went down to the tracks, got our paint, and crept into the yard to do our shit. The tunnel looked really dark that night, someone had broken out a lot of the light bulbs. I didn't like the way it felt, but we still went in after scoping it out. Once we found a car, we got busy and started sketching. By the time we were filling in our pieces there were all kinds of noises coming out of the dark. The whole situation felt real bad, and we all felt the same way about it. So, we packed our shit up and figured we'd go check out the tunnel and make sure everything was ok so we could come back and finish. It just never worked out that way. We spread out and went towards 145 St. Once we got to the entrance to the station we saw a squad of people running in our direction. When they got closer we realized it was the 5-0. We definitely had to brake the fuck out in a hurry. We met up by 139st and booked up the emergency exit. There were like 10 cops chasing us. When we busted out of the exit, we immediately dipped towards my crib which was 1 block away on 140st. We could hear the police sirens as we went into my building. One of my boys told me that a few seconds after we got out the exit, a police car came and rolled their car so one of the tires blocked the cover to the emergency exit to keep it from opening. We had just barely gotten away. A few more seconds and we would have gotten busted. That shit was crazy. I sit here and think about it today, and realize shit like this happened to us all the time. It was part of the whole thing; it probably wouldn't have been the same without it. Looking at it now, It really was just another night in the tunnels.

Much Love to:
AIRBORN, TACK, KAZE, SERVE, ALIVE5, SEAM, PANIC, COPE2, RIZE, DASH167, ZAME, FLEX, SPEEDYLEGS, CHINO, BRYAN, SAMMY, RAVEN, HERON, SEM1.....and the beat goes on!

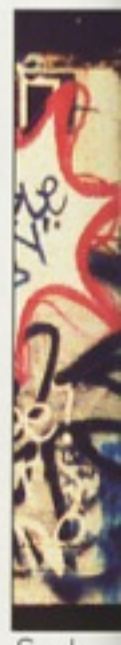
Rize - F.B.A. (mid-1980's)

Cope 2 - K.D. (1983)

Reas - A.O.K. (1987)



Seen - U.A. (6 line, 1981)



Sude -

Slin - F.C., Zame - F.B.A. (1986)

Dero - T.F.P., Know - C.O.D. (5 line, 1987)

" by Tack F.B.A. (1982)

Pana (1982)

Shame - U.A. (6 line, 1985)

Disko - C.I.A. (1981)

-1980's)

"Pas" by Tack - F.B.A. (1983)

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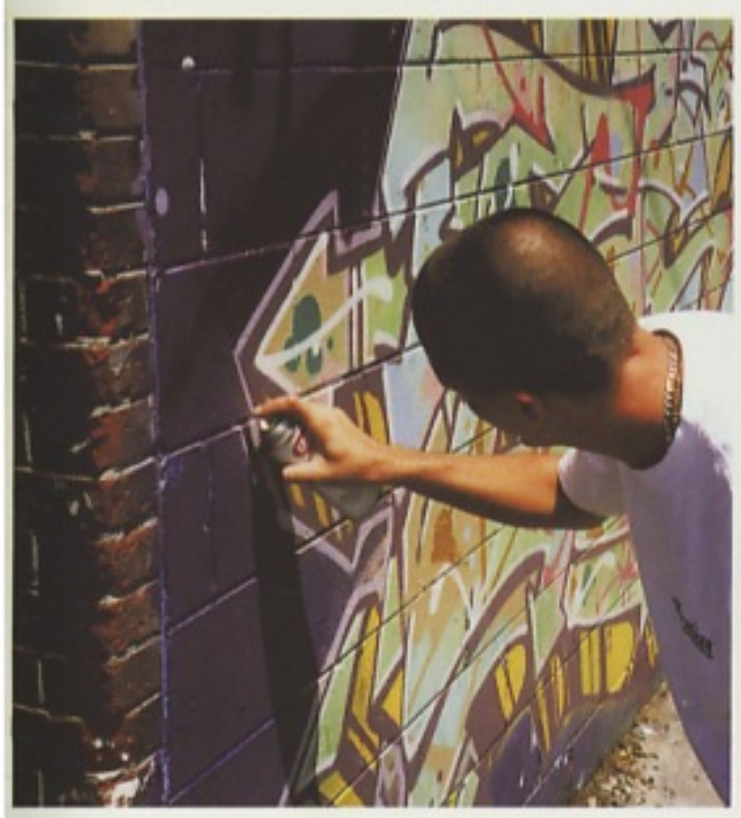

*Credits have been withheld in order to protect the innocent.

Cyne - D.L.K. (Saarbrucken, Germany)

"Bed" by Wow 123 (Bremen, Germany)

Oli, Nina, Os Gemeos (Sao Paulo, Brasil)

Seak - C.N.S., Asem (Germany)

Smo - S.A.C., Bomer - T.H.S., Brok - 3.H.C. (Paris, France)

How - R.A.L., Nut, Nosm - R.A.L. (Germany)

Pakone, Ufone - E.M.T. (Madrid, Spain)

Snek - S.K.S., Dare - T.W.S., Swet - S.U.K. (Switzerland)

Nesm - F.C. (Tokyo, Japan)

Pulse - I.L.C. (Nottingham, England)

"Mom" by Wow 123 (Bremen, Germany)

Kaos - T.C.5. (Berlin, Germany)

Kem - 3.A.

Jorone

Triel - A.C.S., Laura

Emit - D.F.

Jones - Fly I.D.

SMK - Fly I.D.

Jigz

Kaws - F.C.

Zinc - W.H., Smash - F.S.W.

Kept - A.W.R.

Smash - F.S.W.

Nace - D.F.

Cav - T.M.B.

Hence

Bask - S.B.S.

Crispo - M.T.K.

Jolts - Lords

Virus - A.A.

"Rebel" by Hence

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